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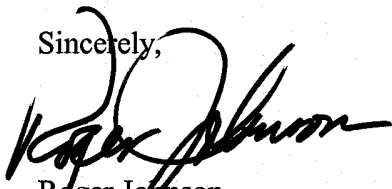
The new *North Dakota Agricultural Statistics 2003* yearbook is an accurate and up-to-date portrait of our state's most important and vital industry. More importantly, it is an invaluable resource for agricultural producers, policymakers and others, as we all work to provide a better future for North Dakota.

A quick look at some of the statistics in the yearbook shows why North Dakotans are so proud of our 30,000 family farmers and ranchers. In 2002, North Dakota led the nation in the production of spring wheat, durum, canola, barley, navy and pinto beans, dry edible peas, flaxseed, sunflowers and honey, and was a leading producer of sugarbeets, lentils, rye and oats. All of this was accomplished during a year in which most of the state was declared a disaster area because of weather conditions and plant disease.

These statistics will help us plan for the future, develop new initiatives and improve existing programs to assist North Dakota producers and the entire agriculture industry in more effectively meeting the challenges and issues of tomorrow.

We at the North Dakota Department of Agriculture are proud to be partners with the North Dakota Agricultural Statistics Service and the North Dakota State University Experiment Station and Extension Service in bringing you this 46th annual edition of *North Dakota Agricultural Statistics*.

Sincerely,


Roger Johnson
Agriculture Commissioner

